

HIGH BRIDGE TRAIL STATE PARK  
MASTER PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
AUGUST 24, 2006  
MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM. Committee members in attendance were: Ms. Aungier, Ms. Burton, Mr. Calkins, Ms. Carney, Mr. Craft, Mr. Floyd, Mr. Fore, Ms. Goin, Ms. Kahl, Mr. Mitchell, Ms. Morris, Ms. Nase, Ms. Puckett, Mr. Rice, Ms. Schmucker, Ms. Swinson, Ms. Terry and Mr. Wilcox. DCR staff in attendance were: Ms. Zahn, Mr. Zawatsky, Mr. Hougland, Mr. Wallace, Ms. Reeder, Ms. Wampler, and Mr. Munson.

The committee reviewed and approved the minutes of the previous meeting and discussed the findings of the public input meeting.

The park goals and objectives were reviewed and revised as noted:

**HIGH BRIDGE TRAIL STATE PARK GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**A. Constitution of Virginia, Article XI-Section 1**

“To the end that the people have clean air, pure water, and the use and enjoyment for recreation of adequate public lands, waters, and other natural resources, it shall be the policy of the Commonwealth to conserve, develop, and utilize its natural resources, its public lands, and historic sites and buildings. Further, it shall be the Commonwealth’s policy to protect its atmosphere, lands, and waters from pollution, impairment, or destruction, for the benefit, enjoyment, and general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth.”

**B. Department of Conservation and Recreation Mission Statement**

“The mission of the Department of Conservation and Recreation is to conserve, protect, and enhance the Commonwealth’s unique natural, recreational, scenic, historic and cultural resources”. Within this broad mission, the Department manages a system of strategically located properties totaling approximately 80,000 acres.

**C. Virginia State Park Mission Statement**

To conserve the natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources of the Commonwealth and provide recreational and educational opportunities consistent with the good stewardship of these lands, waters and facilities that leaves them unimpaired for future generations.

**D. High Bridge Trail Purpose Statement**

The purpose of High Bridge Trail State Park is to provide a premiere non-motorized, shared-use path for pedestrians, bicyclists, and horseback riders in the Heart of Virginia; and to preserve and protect the historic, cultural, natural, and recreational resources in order to interpret the park corridor and offer an understanding of the region's historic events and their causes, impact, and legacy to individuals, the community, and the nation in the full context of American history.

**Goal 1.0 – Protect and conserve the natural, scenic, historic, and cultural resources of the Park.**

Objective 1.1 – Manage the park for the benefit of native species and natural communities and to provide a diversity of wildlife habitats.

Objective 1.2 – Implement the adopted Park Resource Management Plan.

Objective 1.3 – Protect the natural and pastoral setting of the park through an array of land conservation strategies in cooperation with local governments, conservation organizations, and local landowners.

Objective 1.4 – Stabilize and where possible restore the historic structures in the park.

Objective 1.5 – Design, construct and locate new facilities to compliment the natural or historic setting of the park.

Objective 1.6 – Identify, document, preserve, and interpret archeological resources in the park.

Objective 1.7 – Encourage the protection of resources adjacent to the corridor.

Objective 1.8 – Acquire additional properties where needed to enhance park management and operations when made available by willing sellers.

**Goal 2.0 – Provide recreational opportunities for day-use visitors to the park.**

Objective 2.1 – Convert the rail bed to a multi-purpose, non-motorized trail.

Objective 2.2 – Provide trailheads for interpretation, access and use areas.

Objective 2.3 – Provide a range of high quality concession services in the park that facilitate use of the park's many opportunities by all visitors.

Objective 2.4 – Encourage the establishment of private businesses in the vicinity of the park that offer a wide range of quality services to enhance the experience of visitors to the Park and the region.

Objective 2.5 –Enhance the connection of the High Bridge Trail with other trails in the heart of Virginia.

Objective 2.6 –Work with local governments to provide links to local communities and other attractions in the region.

Objective 2.7 –Cooperate with the towns of Burkeville and Pamplin City to extend High Bridge Trail to the train depots in each town.

Objective 2.8 – Cooperate with local governments and the National Park Service to integrate the park into the Route of Lee’s Retreat interpretive trail.

Objective 2.9 – Participate in the development and management of the Appomattox River Canoe Trail in Virginia.

Objective 2.10 –Provide opportunities for picnicking to include shelters, restroom facilities, roads, and parking at appropriate locations along the trail.

Objective 2.11 –Develop a series of rest stops and comfort stations at appropriate intervals along the trail.

Objective 2.12- Connect Lancer Village to High Bridge Trail.

Objective 2.13- Provide for controlled alternative methods of access to the High Bridge Battlefield.

Objective 2.14- Provide for development of a trailhead site in the vicinity of Aspen Hill Road intersection.

**Goal 3.0 – Provide overnight facilities for visitors to the park.**

Objective 3.1 – Offer a range of camping opportunities (including equestrian camping) at appropriate locations along the corridor.

Objective 3.2 – Encourage private providers to develop overnight accommodations (including equestrian camping) at locations accessible from the trail.

**Goal 4.0 – To provide the focal point for interpretation, environmental education, and public information dissemination relating to conservation of significant scenic,**

**natural, historic, cultural, archaeological, and geological resources of the High Bridge Trail corridor and the Heart of Virginia region.**

Objective 4.1 – Develop a park interpretive plan that will dovetail with the story of Lee’s Retreat.

Objective 4.2 – Stabilize and maintain High Bridge and the remaining brick piers and interpret the Civil War battle.

Objective 4.3 – Restore Prospect depot and partner with Prospect Historical Society to develop appropriate interpretive displays.

Objective 4.4 – Provide a full-time park interpreter to guide interpretive and education programs in the Park and at the High Bridge Battlefield.

Objective 4.5 – Develop displays, brochures and interpretive programs that tell the story of the High Bridge corridor—featuring both natural resources (geology, flora, fauna) and historic resources (Native American, settlement, Civil War, Civil Rights, and transportation).

Objective 4.6 - Provide self-guided interpretive programs.

Objective 4.7 – Develop an interpretive center at the High Bridge Battlefield area.

Objective 4.8 – Acquire needed properties suitable for park educational, interpretive, and management programs when made available by willing sellers.

**Goal 5.0 – Participate in mutually beneficial efforts with local governments, local businesses, and partner organizations to enhance the entire region.**

Objective 5.1 – Work cooperatively with local jurisdictions, conservation organizations, historical groups, educational institutions, land trusts, and landowners along the High Bridge Trail corridor to ensure conservation of the scenic, natural and cultural resources of the region.

Objective 5.2 – Actively partner with local tourism agencies, chambers of commerce, Longwood University, Virginia’s Retreat, Carver-Price school, and other providers of outdoor recreation/education activities in the High Bridge Trail region to promote the area, and to provide information to the visiting public.

Objective 5.3 – Partner with private businesses and public agencies to ensure that recreational and hospitality offerings and educational opportunities provided to park visitors meet the highest standards.

Objective 5.4 – Foster community support and volunteerism in the park.

Objective 5.5 – Participate in local and regional planning efforts to foster sustainable land use and development that protects the natural features and scenic beauty of the High Bridge Trail corridor and the region.

**Goal 6.0 – Administer and manage the park in a manner that fosters the public’s trust.**

Objective 6.1 – Secure the High Bridge Trail State Park corridor with gates, signs, and security patrols while under development. Open the park to the public as each segment is developed, adequately staffed and equipped.

Objective 6.2 – Provide adequate vehicles and equipment to support management, operations and maintenance of the park.

Objective 6.3 – Provide appropriate staffing with the necessary skills and certifications to achieve the park’s goals and objectives.

Objective 6.4 – Provide services and facilities that meet adjacent landowner and public expectations for security, safety and health.

Objective 6.5 – Assure proper care and maintenance of park facilities and infrastructure.

Objective 6.6 – Provide staff residences at appropriate locations within a short distance from the park corridor.

Objective 6.7 – Provide park administrative offices and maintenance facilities at management nodes.

Objective 6.8 – Conduct periodic engineering analyses of all trail bridges and structures to ensure their safe condition for public use.

Objective 6.9 – Provide safe drinking water systems for all major park public use areas.

Objective 6.10 – Provide sanitary facilities at reasonable intervals along the Trail and at the High Bridge.

Objective 6.11 – Deck and secure High Bridge.

Objective 6.12- Meet ADA accessibility standards in the park.

## General Discussion

There was discussion about how to route the access road from the proposed parking area at Aspen Hill road to High Bridge. The committee indicated that they preferred a parallel path to the trail to provide space for carriages, shuttle buses, or whatever form of transportation is approved for visitors to High Bridge in the early stages of development of the park. All seemed to agree that an ideal solution would be to have a visitor center located near High Bridge that would have a separate access road and a parking lot.

The question of surfacing of the section of trail that runs through Farmville was discussed. Most thought that an asphalt surface might be more appropriate given the heavier year-round use that would be expected. The appropriateness of allowing horses to travel through Farmville was discussed and the consensus seemed to be that they should be allowed to pass through town if a safe way can be found to allow it. A separate none-paved pathway might be provided for them. It was suggested that the Farmville Town Council might want to consider the horse issue and to decide how best to accommodate them through town.

During the discussion of the park within the town suggestions were made about how to make it a true amenity. It was suggested the park be well landscaped with trees, shrubs, planted areas, benches, and attractive lighting. It was mentioned that an exception to the park's general rule about closing at dusk might need to be applied in town limits.

Although the use of carriages on the trail was popular with some committee members, most felt that they should only be permitted for special events because someone will have to unlock the gates that block motorized users. Emergency services (police, fire, and EMS) will have their own copies of keys for these gates.

The question was raised about the future status of existing crossings, and it was stated that deeded crossings would continue to be honored by the state.

## Park Facility Locations

The committee rolled out the maps of the corridor to discuss specific locations for park facilities. A brief description of each notation follows:

Connect to trailhead in Pamplin City (Rt. 460 ROW)

Directional signage-green box site on existing VDOT property /Shields

Potential connection via Rt. 626 to Featherfin Wildlife Management Area/Elam

Repair crossing at Rt. 626

Administrative and maintenance node, staff residence/Prospect

Equestrian parking and major trailhead at renovated museum depot/Prospect

Little trailhead at Rt. 698/Tuggle

Connect through industrial park (STEPS and/or CMC/SMI) to athletic fields/Farmville

Connect to Dogwood Trail system/Farmville

Investigate connection to Hampden Sydney and new YMCA along Buffalo Creek sewer easement/Farmville

Interpret Israel Hill, Bizarre Plantation, Moton School/Farmville  
Provide equestrian parking east of the Appomattox River along River Road/Farmville  
Connect to Lancer Village along old narrow-gauge railroad/Farmville  
Staff residence and main park office (potential for depot?)/Farmville  
Potential parking lot at Bob's Glass (would facilitate river access for a canoe/kayak takeout -- potential put-in at town-owned property along Buffalo Creek)  
Interpret battlefield and other major fighting east of Farmville (General Thomas Smythe, last Union General mortally wounded in the Civil War)  
Interpret the spot where troops divided at Jamestown Road  
Interpret the four forts that guarded High Bridge and the old wagon bridge crossing to the fort  
Access to bridge through parallel road, trailhead parking/Aspen Hill/High Bridge  
Construct access road, interpretive facility/visitor center at High Bridge  
Concession operation for equestrian parking or campground/Aspen Hill/High Bridge  
Administrative and maintenance node, staff residence/Rice  
Interpret Burke's Tavern (Rt. 607 to Rt. 621)  
Interpret Lee's Retreat  
Connect to Twin Lakes State Park/Rice  
Rest area and parking/Rice  
Connect to trailhead in Burkeville

Mr. Calkins provided a copy of a plan view of the fortifications at High Bridge for future interpretation.

The committee was reminded that the next meeting to complete the mapping would be held in the VDOT Training Center at 1:00 PM on Thursday, September 28, 2006.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 PM.